

ANIMATO!

issue two



**IN
THIS
ISSUE:**

**SNOW WHITE
SUPERMAN
DRAGON'S LAIR
TEX AVERY
JAPANIMATION
plus
more!**

\$1

TEX AVERY: KING OF CARTOONS



Friday, September 30th at 7:30 P.M. at Boston Film/Video Foundation
1126 Boylston Street, Boston, near the auditorium stop, green line
ADMISSION: \$3.00...CARTOON members: \$1.50. A nonprofit organization.

Hello, and welcome to Animato! #2. There's a lot we need to discuss, so let's start now:

1. Our first show, The Best of Warner Brothers, was a rousing success. Expenses were quite great, however, and we're hoping our next show, the Best of Tex Avery: King of Cartoons, will make up for it. That show will be on September 30th, at the Boston Film/Video Foundation (again).

2. A post office box has been purchased to better facilitate mailings and receiving of films and also to keep the mail carrier from giving me strange looks when I get mail addressed to "CARTOONE". The new address is: PO Box 1240, Cambridge, MA 02238.

3. We are working on a deal with the Boston Public Libraries to borrow their animations for showings. They have quite a selection of classic Disneys and UPAs as well as many more recent pieces. The snag we're running into is that we are not allowed to charge admission to these showings, so we can't show them at BF/VP or we'd lose money (since we have to rent BF/VP's facilities). What we're looking for is a hall or auditorium or church that will let us put on shows free to the public. Any help any of our readers or members may have will be greatly appreciated.

4. We plan on having a "meeting" at the pizza parlor next door to BF/VP after the Tex Avery showing. We hope all of our members and all prospective members will be able to attend. We'll just get together, talk, plan for future events, and generally decide where we want CARTOONE to go. (This is tentative).

5. We really could use help on Animato!. Have you seen a film recently you wanted to comment on? Do you have an opinion on some classic you'd like to share? Are you an artist who can draw for us? Anything accepted will be rewarded with free passes to the next scheduled show. We also are trying to compile a "morgue" of articles, photos, drawings and things associated with animation to have on hand for the issues. Any help here would be appreciated as well. Old articles, xeroxed copies, or originals will be appreciated. Be forewarned that they cannot be returned, but if used, we will list you as a contributor to the issue in which it is used.

For those of you who haven't yet figured out what we're talking about yet, we're CARTOONE (Cinematic Animation Round Table Organization Of New England) and we publish Animato! four times a year and put on film screenings approximately every two months. Membership is \$5.00 a year and gives a subscription and half price admission to all shows. Make checks payable to Mike Ventrella (we don't have a bank account for CARTOONE yet. Wait until we have more members).

Well, enough of that; on with the show!

Editor: Mike Ventrella

Pseudo Editor: Scott Gillespie

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Caren Perlmutter

Frank Strom

Mark Waid

Craig Walton

P.S.: Off The Wall cinema in Central Square in Cambridge is having its annual animation festival soon. Go and enjoy, and be sure to tell them you read about it in Animato! Sept. 30-Oct. 13: Warner Brothers. Oct. 14-Oct. 20: Ten Best of the 80s. Oct. 20-Oct. 27: 18th Tournee of Animation. Oct. 28-Nov. 3: Will Vinton's Clay Animation. Nov. 4-Nov. 9: John Hubley. Nov. 10: Boston Animators. Nov. 11-Nov. 17: Felix the Cat. Nov. 18-Nov 23: Best of Magic Movies.

Letters

Dear Animato,

Saw your Warner Brothers festival in early summer and loved it! Enclosed is a check for a single membership!

Deborah Dean
Harvard, MA

Dear Animato,

Hi! Read about your club in Jim Korkis' "Cel Break" in The Comic Reader. I think it's great that there's finally a Boston area group interested in animation.

My particular favorites are the Fleischer cartoons (Koko, Bimbo, Popeye, Betty Boop, Superman) and of course the Warner Brothers and Disney cartoons of the 30s, 40s, and 50s. I also have a soft spot for the admittedly limited animation of the Hanna-Barbera (Jonny Quest, Space Ghost, Herculoids, Birdman, et. al.) and Filmation (Tarzan, Lone Ranger, Flash Gordon, Star Trek, Space Sentinels, Superman, Batman, Aquaman, Web Woman, etc., etc., etc...ad infinitum) adventure cartoons. Yes, I actually like "Spiderman and His Amazing Friends." (Remember the old Gantray-Lawrence Marvel Super Heroes cartoons? Now that was limited animation! I'd still like to see them again, though...)

Last, but not least, there's the dynamic designs and bold colors of the Japanese stuff (best exemplified by "Force Five"). Probably the best stuff being done for TV today. Wish WNXE would get some new ones, though...they've been showing the same episodes for 2½ years.

OK, that's enough, hope I haven't bored you. I do tend to ramble on the subject (a good sign, maybe?).

Dennis Roy
Lowell, MA



FRIDAY

The Cinematic Animation Round Table Organization of New England will present "The Best of Warner Brothers," a compilation of classic cartoons, at 7:30 p.m. at the Boston Film/Video Foundation, 1126 Boylston St., Boston. Because of their racist, sexist or violent aspect, many of these cartoons have never been shown on national television. Included are "The Great Piggy Bank Robbery," "Inki and the Lion," "Porky's Road Race," "The Dover Boys," "Coal Black and De Sebben Dwarfs" and a rare uncut version of "Daffy Doc." Tickets are \$3, \$1.50 for organization members.

SPECIALS

The Best of Warner Brothers — Held at Boston Film-Video Foundation, 1126 Boylston St. Telephone 538-7128. July 8 7:30 p.m. \$3. members CARTOONE \$1.50. Animated films not shown on television: "Daffy Doc," "Porky in Wackylund," "The Great Piggy Bank Robbery," "Porky's Road Race," "The Lion," "A Tale of Two Kitties," "Hamateur Hour," "Thugs with Dirty Mugs," "Kitty Kornered," "The Dover Boys," "Elmer's Candid Camera," "Bacali to Arms," "Duck Amuck," "Daffy Duck and Egghead," "Coal Black and De Sebben Dwarfs." Sponsored by CARTOONE (Cinematic Animation Round Table Organization of New England).

Dear Animato,

Having just read Animato! #1, I must commend you on the quality and professionalism the magazine displayed. As one nameless fan who resides in New Jersey would phrase it: "I approve."

Secondly, I'd like to thank you for letting me cut loose and voice my opinions and insights with "The Rising Cel." I can do more installments, can't I? Please?? (Pwease, Mister Wabbit?)

I found the overview of "Rock and Rule" to be fairly accurate. The only problem with it as I saw it was that it tended to be cynical in its review and outlook. Please try to steer away from this attitude, or you'll find yourself becoming like those hard assed old farts who write The Comics Journal.

Regarding the Variety Top Films article; I really could see no point or reason for including such an article in Animato!. A fan publication like Animato! should be dealing with reviews, overviews, and tributes to various animated films-- not with petty statistics such as what cartoon made more money than that such and such cartoon.

You had a good line up for your first animation screening (Best of WB), though I would have added "What's Opera, Doc" and "The Rabbit of Seville" to the list of chosen cartoons.

I hope to see a future screening showcasing the best of the Bullwinkle family of cartoons (i.e.: Bullwinkle, Dudley Do-Right, and Uncle Waldo).

Frank E. Strom
(Resident of the Back Bay Holt)
Revere

Letters

Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs

(from The New York Times, January 14, 1938. Used without permission)

by Frank S. Nugent

Sheer fantasy, delightful, gay and altogether captivating, touched the screen yesterday when Walt Disney's long awaited feature length cartoon of the Grimm fairy tale, "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs" had its local premiere at the Radio City Music Hall. Let your fears be quieted at once: Mr. Disney and his amazing technical crew have outdone themselves. The picture more than matches expectations. It is a classic, as important cinematically as "The Birth of a Nation" or the birth of Mickey Mouse. Nothing



quite like it has been done before; and already we have grown impolite enough to clamor for an encore. Another helping, please!

You can visualize it best if you imagine a child, with a wonderful, Puckish imagination, nodding over his favorite fairy tale and dreaming a dream in which the story would come true. He would see Snow White, victim of the wicked Queen's jealousy, dressed in rags, singing at her work quite unmindful of the Magic Mirror's warning to the Queen that the Princess, not she, was now the "fairest in the land." Then he would see Snow White's banishment from the castle, her fearful flight from the hobgoblins of the forest, her adoption by all the friendly little creatures of the wood and her refuge at the home of the seven dwarfs.



RADIO CITY MUSIC HALL

Showplace of the Nation
STARTS TODAY

Rockefeller Center
Doors Open 11:30 A. M.



Walt Disney creates a modern miracle... the magician whose genius has peopled the world with lovable creatures, captures a dream of enchantment... in laughter, suspense and fantasy, in exquisite beauty of color and design his first full length picture is the most inspired, the most human, the most artistic triumph ever to come out of Hollywood.

WALT DISNEY'S Masterpiece
SNOW WHITE
AND THE SEVEN DWARFS
A Full Length Picture in Multiplane Technicolor

ON THE GREAT STAGE
"THE MAGAZINE RACK"... the fourth edition of the Music Hall's popular revue presenting in song and dance an interpretation of well known publications... produced by Russell Markert, with settings by Nat Karman, featuring Viola Philo, Whitey and Ed Ford, Carr Brothers, Helen Berke, with the Glee Club, Corps de Ballet, Rockettes and augmented ensembles. Symphony Orchestra direction Erno Rapee playing Maurice Baron's symphonic variation on "Carnival of Venice."

Picture at:
11:30, 2:27, 5:05,
7:30, 10:25

Stage Show at:
1:15, 3:35, 6:45,
9:25

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And then, if this child had a truly marvelous imagination--the kind of impish imagination that Mr. Disney and his men possess--he might have seen the seven dwarfs as the picture sees them. There are Doc, who sputters and twists his words, and Happy, who is a rollicking little elf, and Grumpy, who is terribly grumpy--at first--and Sleepy, who drowzes, and Sneezy, who acts like a volcano with hay fever, and Bashful, who blushes to the roots of his long white beard, and Dopey. Dopey really deserves a sentence all by himself. No, we'll make it a paragraph, because Dopey is here to stay.

Dopey is the youngest of the seven dwarfs. He is beardless, with a buttony nose, a wide mouth, Gable ears, cross-purpose eyes, and the most disarming, winning, helpless, puppy dog expression that a creature ever had. If we had to dissect him, we'd say he was one part little Benny from the comic strips, one part Worry-Wart of the same and one part Pluto, of Mickey Mouse. There may, too, be just a dash of Harpo Marx. But he's all Dopey, forever out of step in the dwarfs' processions, doomed to carry the red tail-light when they go to their jewel mines, and speechless. As Doc explains, "he never tried to talk."

So there they are, all seven of them, to protect the little Princess from her evil stepmother, the Queen, to dance and frolic and cavort in comic Disneyesque patterns, and ultimately to keep vigil at Snow White's glass and gold coffin until Prince Charming imprints "love's first kiss" upon her lips and so releases her from the sleeping death that claimed her after she ate the witch's poisoned apple. For this, you know, is partly the story of Sleeping Beauty.

But no child, of course, could dream a dream like this. For Mr. Disney's humor has the simplicity of extreme sophistication. The little bluebird who overreaches itself and hits a flat note to the horror of its parents; the way the animals help Snow White clean house, with the squirrels using their tails as dusters, the swallows scalloping pies with their feet, the fawns licking the plates clean, the chipmunks twirling cobwebs about their tails and pulling free; or the ticklish tortoise when the rabbits use his ribbed underside as a scrubbing board-- all of these are beyond a youngster's imagination, but not beyond his delight.

And technically it is superb. In some of the early sequences there may be an uncertainty of line, a jerkiness in the movements of the Princess; but it is corrected later and hand and lip movements assume an uncanny reality. The dwarfs and animals are flawless from the start.

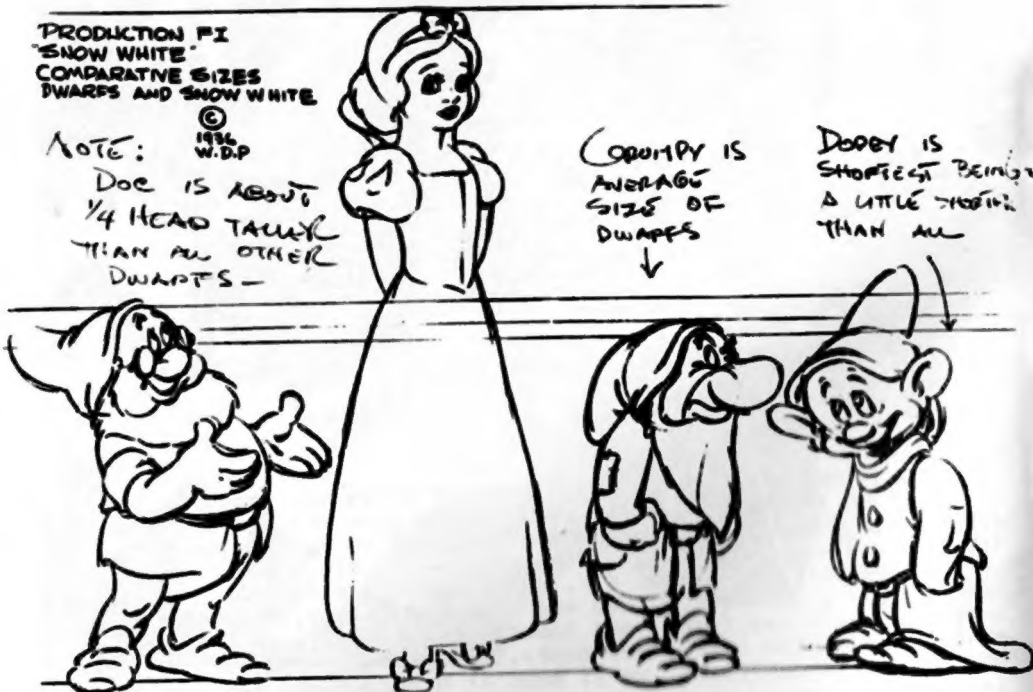
PRODUCTION #1
"SNOW WHITE"
COMPARATIVE SIZES
DWARFS AND SNOW WHITE

©
1936
W.D.P.

NOTE:
DOC IS ABOUT
1/4 HEAD TALLER
THAN ALL OTHER
DWARFS -

DOPEY IS
AVERAGE
SIZE OF
DWARFS
↓

DOPEY IS
SHORTEST BEING
A LITTLE TALLER
THAN ALL
↓



Still the fairest of them all

by Mike Ventrella

Make no mistake about it--"Snow White" is one of the greatest films ever...Not just one of the best animated films, but a fine movie in itself. It is a rare film that can elicit such varied genuine emotions. Watching "Snow White" makes us laugh, cry, grab our seats in suspense and recoil in horror. Few other films can claim such an accomplishment.

Walt Disney was never the type to rest on his past accomplishments, easy as that would have been. In 1934, only five years after he introduced the first sound cartoon to the world and only two years after the first color cartoon, Walt began plans for the first full length animated feature.

The film community thought he was crazy. Cartoons were for kids, they said. No one would go to see a full length kid show! Disney had difficulty raising the needed money, which he estimated would be at \$250,000 (This is in 1934, remember). One story concerns a backer who was ready to pull out because of his fears of failure. Walt quickly patched together as much of the film that was completed at the time as he could, filling in the blank areas with pencil tests or photos while a narrator filled in the action. The backer sat through the presentation expressionless, while sweat gathered on Walt's brow. He anxiously followed the backer to his car, hoping to get some sort of answer. The backer sat in his car, chomped his cigar, and then finally said, "That thing's going to make a ton of money," and then drove off. Walt was elated.

The film continued, but ran into other difficulties. New production techniques were required. The field size had to be enlarged so that the animators would not have to draw so small in order to get a large cast into one scene. This also necessitated enlarged cameras and a process for shrinking and enlarging cels. Eventually the famed multiplane camera was produced and tested on the Academy award winning short "The Old Mill." The multiplane camera, which stood about ten feet tall, enabled the animators to give a much more realistic depiction of 3D, since the camera could now zoom in focus and show backgrounds moving at different speeds. It is such a common effect that now it is barely noticeable.

Finally, in 1937, after the budget had grown to over six times the original estimate (From \$250,000 to \$1.5 Million), "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs" opened to enthusiastic crowds. It was the night Disney had always dreamed of--an exclusive engagement at Radio City Music Hall with a star studded audience. As the review printed earlier shows, it was an immediate hit.

What made the film a success however was Walt's single minded attention to detail in every aspect of the film. It was determined early on that this could not be paced the same as a short or else it would burn out prematurely. To this end, Walt cut many scenes (and many animator's hearts) to keep the action brisk. Cut scenes included comedy bits showing the dwarfs eating and building a bed and a fully completed scene cut at the very last minute which showed the death of Snow White's mother. The pacing was greatly improved by these cuts. The humor of the dwarfs is intercut with

the evil activities of the Queen to keep the story moving and to add an ironic sort of juxtaposition to keep us in suspense.

The characterization is also very important. Snow White, unlike many boring heroines, actually has a personality. The Queen is more than a mere evil foil--she is horrifying on an adult scale with her demands for Snow White's heart and her callous attitude for the dead prisoner in her dungeon. (It was the Queen's penchant for eliciting nightmares in young children that endured some countries to restrict the film.) The triumphing characterization achievement however was the dwarfs. In spite of Disney, they had no names or personalities. Walt gave them each a separate existence. There is no way anyone could confuse Dopey for Doc or Sleepy. Each dwarf was actually drawn by a separate animator as so to give each as distinct personalities as possible. Character sheets were drawn up describing subtle differences--quickness of reaction, posture, nervous tics, whatever. And it worked.

Music also played an enormous role in the success of the film. Walt chose eight tunes out of the twenty five written, and had these carefully orchestrated. Entire scenes were set to music to great satisfaction.

With all of these elements so carefully considered, it would have been a surprise if the film had not been a hit. Because it all worked, Disney became more than a mere kiddie cartoon producer, and he then set his sights higher: Fantasia, A TV show, a theme park, EPCOT. He was the greatest dreamer of our lifetimes.

"Snow White" is still playing in the suburbs as of this writing. If you haven't seen it since your childhood, you owe it to yourself to go.



Dirk, don, & the dragon



A new piece of high quality animation has been released that can only be viewed on a small screen for 50¢. It's plot is determined by whoever is watching--or should we say playing.

As you may have surmised by now, this new animation is found in a new video game called *Dragon's Lair*, which is currently sweeping the arcades in popularity.

The game is 22 full minutes of full animation done by the Don Bluth studio ("*The Secret of NIMH*") set on a laser disc. As the game progresses, you are shown scenes and much make decisions which will determine your fate. This is accomplished by a joystick control and a button which deploys a sword.

The setting is a medieval castle filled with monsters, traps, and treasure. (Players of *Dungeons and Dragons* should love this game.) The characters are Dirk the Daring, a chivalrous knight in semi-shining armor (who you play regardless of your sex) and Princess Daphne, a most sexy maiden-in-distress who must be saved from the clutches of an evil dragon (cliche, eh?).

Before Dirk can rescue Daphne from said dragon, he must first pass through a variable sequence of challenges. There are about 40 scenes, from swinging across chasms via burning ropes to battling the "Lizard King" (which is basically a lizard wearing kingly robes and wielding a mean sceptre).

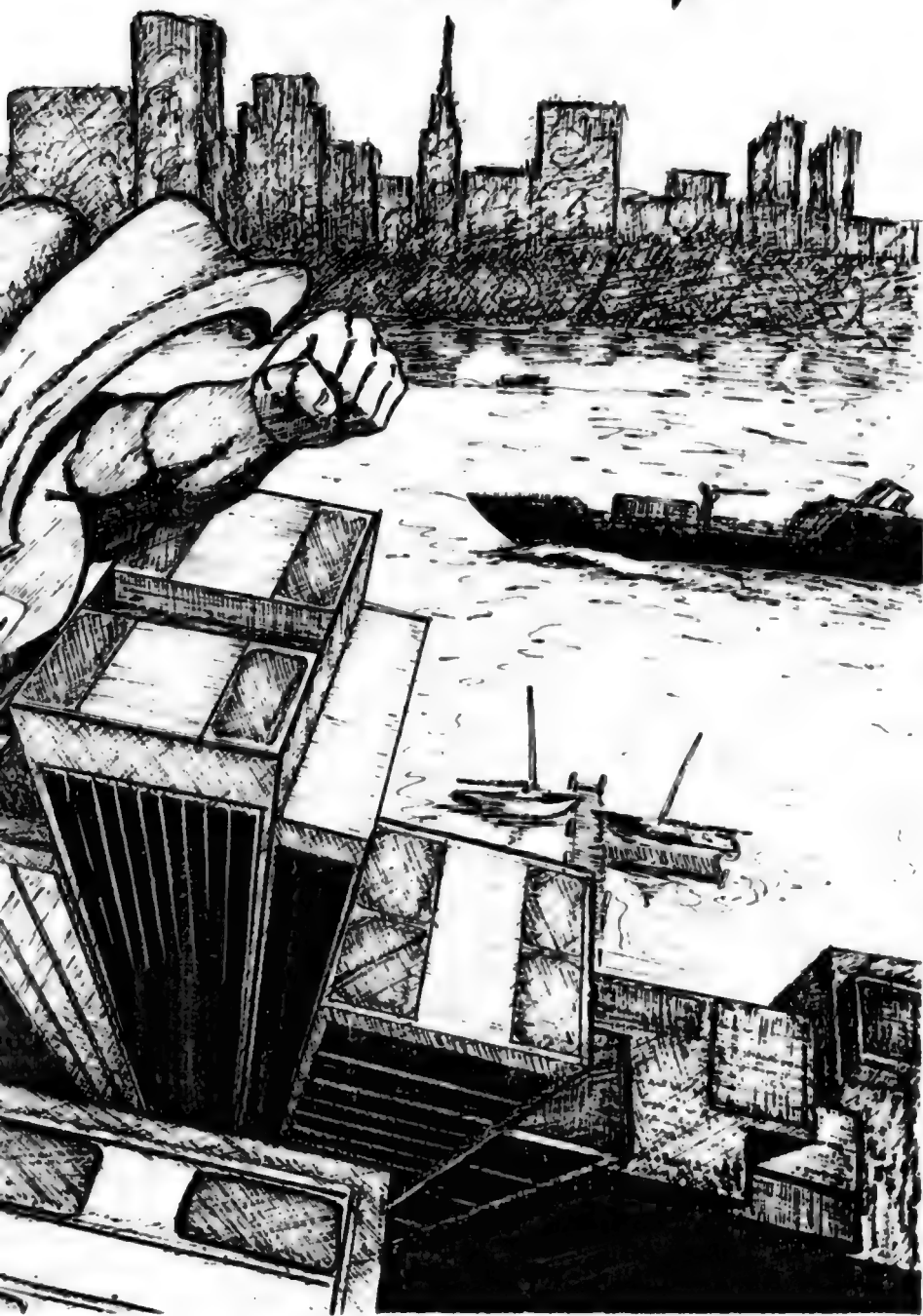
How you choose your actions will decide if you are shown animation depicting your victory over the obstacle or your defeat--and defeat means death. Most arcades give you 5 lives per 50¢, but some only allow three.

There is still the difficulty of the occasional break in the action which occurs when you choose wrong actions and the machine frantically searches its laser discs for the proper scene. The dying scenes can also be a bit gruesome (though often hilarious).

The game cost millions to design and create, and is the herald of a new form of video games. Other companies are said to have similar games in preparation, and Bluth is now preparing a science fiction game along the same lines.



**SUPERMAN
MEETS
MAX AND DAVE**



Few creations have captured the dreams and aspirations of the American public like Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster's Superman. His popularity spread like wildfire at the beginnings of World War II, from his first appearance in the pages of the June, 1938 issue of Action Comics, to his own title a year later, and then into the comic strips and a three (later five)-times-a-week radio program. Despite the hoopla that accompanies each successive Superman film of recent years, this was the apex of the career of the last son of Krypton. Americans at war and still recovering from a depression latched on to the concept of a demi-god that fought for truth, justice, and democracy. Servicemen here and abroad bought Superman comics left and right for a quick read and much needed escape, and Superman merchandise was in every department store in the nation. Superman was Superbusiness.

Superbusiness that Paramount studios, holders of Max and Dave Fleischer's contract, wanted a piece of.

It was obvious. Before \$40 million budgeted movies became a reality, animation was the next logical step for such a larger than life character.

Dave Fleischer was not very impressed with the idea, however. He felt that the cost of doing such a cartoon properly would be prohibitive, and he really didn't want all of the headaches that go with doing such a massive project. When Paramount asked how much they needed, Dave replied that they would need \$10,000 per film (more than three times the cost of an average cartoon) and seven months production time (more than twice the normal). Dave was sure that these high demands would kill the plan. He was quite surprised when Paramount said "yes."

In all, seventeen cartoons were produced out of Miami from 1941 to 1943, and all got the royal treatment from the Fleischers. Bud Collier, the voice of the radio Superman, was brought in to do the first half dozen cartoons. The attention to lighting was awesome, especially in the night sequence of "Jungle Drums." And when the scene was dominated by a light source, the frame was color tinted to indicate such.

But what endears these productions to Superman fans everywhere is their faithfulness to the source material. In fact, they are without a doubt the truest adaptations into another medium ever taken from comic books. For this was primal Superman, not yet weary from all the changes and additions to the original legend that the sixties would bring (Supergirl, Superboy, et al.) -- who was superstrong, invulnerable, and could leap an eighth of a mile, and this is what we saw on the screen. Indeed, the studio only made one change. They said that such a character looked silly leaping around the city, so they gave him the power of flight. And he's been flying ever since.



- 1941--SUPERMAN
 director Dave Fleisher
 writers Seymour Kneitel,
 Isidore Sparber
 animation Steve Muffati,
 Frank Endres
- 1941--THE MECHANICAL MONSTERS
 director Seymour Kneitel
 writers Isidore Sparber
 Seymour Kneitel
 animation Steve Muffati,
 George Germannitti
- 1942--BILLION DOLLAR LIMITED
 director Dave Fleisher
 writers Seymour Kneitel,
 Isidore Sparber
 animation Myron Waldman,
 Frank Endres
- 1942--DESTRUCTION, INC.
 director Isidore Sparber
 writer Jay Morton
 animation Dave Tendlar,
 Tom Moore
- 1942--ELECTRONIC EARTHQUAKE
 director Dave Fleisher
 writers Seymour Kneitel,
 Isidore Sparber
 animation Steve Muffati,
 Arnold Gillespie
- 1942--SHOWDOWN
 director Isidore Sparber
 writer Jay Morton
 animation Steve Muffati,
 Arnold Gillespie
- 1942--TERROR ON THE MIDWAY
 director Dave Fleisher
 writers Jay Morton
 Dan Gordon
 animation Orestes Calpini,
 Jim Davis
- 1942--ARCTIC GIANT
 director Dave Fleischer
 writers Bill Turner,
 Ted Pierce
 animation Willard Bowsky,
 Reuben Grossman
- 1942--THE BULLETERS
 director Dave Fleischer
 writers Bill Turner,
 Carl Meyer
 animation Orestes Calpini,
 Graham Place
- 1942--THE ELEVENTH HOUR
 director Dan Gordon
 writers Carl Meyer,
 William Turner
 animation Willard Bowsky,
 William Henning
- 1942--THE JAPOTEURS
 director Seymour Kneitel
 writers Bill Turner,
 Carl Meyer
 animation Myron Waldman
 Nicholas Tafuri
- 1942--THE MAGNETIC TELESCOPE
 director Dave Fleischer
 writers Dan Gordon
 Carl Meyer
 animation Myron Waldman,
 Thomas Moore
- 1942--VOLCANO
 director Dave Fleischer
 writers Bill Turner
 Carl Meyer
 animation Willard Bowsky,
 Otto Feuer
- 1943--JUNGLE DRUES
 director Dan Gordon
 writers Robert Little,
 Jay Morton
 animation Myron Waldman,
 Thomas Moore
- 1943--SECRET AGENT
 director Seymour Kneitel
 writer Carl Meyer
- 1943--THE MUMMY STRIKES
 director Isidore Sparber
 writer Jay Morton
 animation Myron Waldman,
 Graham Place
- 1943--UNDERGROUND WORLD
 director Seymour Kneitel
 writer Jay Morton
 animation Myron Waldman,
 Thomas Moore (?)



TEK!



By Mike Ventrella

In our last issue, we looked at what we considered the best of Warner Brothers cartoons. Fortunately, we were able to obtain most of them for our showing. On September 30th, once again at the Boston Film/Video Foundation, we will be showing the best of Tex Avery. Hopefully we will be able to obtain most of these as well.

Tex Avery's universe was one where anything could happen, and it usually did. Tex was a master at direction, pacing, and timing, and would have become one of our greatest comedy directors, adored by "serious" film students, if only he couldn't draw. In fact, he used to hang around the MGM lot and give ideas to directors working on the film comedies.

For a wonderful account of Avery's work, we recommend the excellent Tex Avery: King of Cartoons by Joe Adamson.

Anyway, without further wait, here is our list of Avery's best. (This was difficult, but so was last month's). We didn't include "Hamateur Night" since we showed it last time, and we also cut out "King Size Canary" and "Swing Shift Cinderella" because Off The Wall just showed them.

PORKY'S DUCK HUNT (1937) Porky goes off hunting, with disastrous results. He also meets a crazy mixed up duck who goes hoo hooing all over the lake. (Guess who's first appearance!)

DAFFY DUCK AND EGGHEAD (1937) A rarely seen film. Daffy sings "The Merry-go-Round Broke Down" which, of course, is the Looney Tunes theme song.

THUGS WITH DIRTY MUGS (1939) Tried to get this for the last showing but was unsuccessful. See last issue.

HOLLYWOOD STEPS OUT (1941) One of the popular character films of the era, with appearances by rotoscoped versions of Henry Fonda, Jimmy Stewart, Groucho and Harpo Marx, James Cagney, Buster Keaton, Humphrey Bogart, the Three Stooges, Oliver Hardy, etc., etc....

WHO KILLED WHO? (1943) First MGM film on our list. A film so full of gags that the plot is lost in about the first minute, but who cares? Look for Red Skeleton. (That's not misspelled.)

SCREWBALL SQUIRREL (1944) Avery tried to create a Bugs Bunny for MGM, but all he came up with was a creature so utterly mad that he was endearing to no one and had no long term potency. He was still just crazy enough to provide us with some of the most esoteric and original cartoons of the era, however, and we hope to get at least one.

LITTLE TINKER (1948) It's one thing to have a horny wolf howling over a beautiful woman, but to have cute little female bunnies doing the same thing to a Frank Sinatra look alike is quite another matter--the type of matter that only Tex could get away with. An excellent cartoon full of wonderful gags. Even the Frank Sinatra gags are good.

LUCKY DUCKY (1948) What! Another duck hunt? Don't those animators ever get tired of hunting jokes? I guess not, because Tex gives us some brand new ones. My favorite in this cartoon has the duck pouring pepper into his assailant's nose (literally). As the sneeze builds to its ultimate finale, our fine feathered friend hands the hapless victim a cream pie. (What in the world is going on here? we ask.) The sneeze goes blast! into the pie, which flies off screen onto the sneezer's hunting companion. (Oh, so that's what the pie's for!). Tex isn't finished, though. The companion is then seen covered in cream, which somehow has managed to arrange itself on his body to make him look like Santa Claus. (Should I mention the jingle bells in the background?) Actually, it's a typical Avery gag, but I guess I love the absurdity of it all. Guess you had to be there.

BAD LUCK BLACKIE (1949) There's this black cat, see? And everytime he walks in front of this mean dog, something falls on the dog's head. Bam! A flowerpot. A horseshoe (then three others, and the befuddled horse as well). A wall. And just when you realise he's been hitten by everything but the kitchen sink, guess what comes down?

SEÑOR DROOPY (1949) We couldn't do without one Droopy. This one pits him against the wolf and a ruthless bull. More Avery madness.

DRAG-A-LONG DROOPY (1954) Droopy is a sheep herder in this, my favorite Droopy. He counts sheep in order to get to sleep. They count Droopies. So full of gags I can't think of just one to pick out as an example. (Moo! Moo! Moo! Baa! Baa! yells the cow to the cowboy. "What are you all talkin' about?" says the cowboy. "Shhep, stupid!" yells the cow.) Exciting, isn't it?

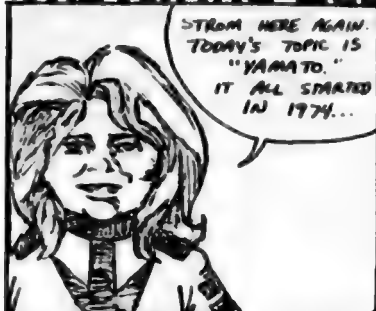
THE THREE LITTLE PUPS (1953) Droopy and his two brothers act out the three little pigs story, but don't worry. They get rid of the story in the first minute, so there's plenty of time for the jokes.

THE LEGEND OF ROCKAWAY POINT (1955) After Tex left MGM to work for Lantz, he produced this gem. Tex didn't stay long, however. He had been spoiled by MGM's magnificent budgets, and suddenly going to Lantz, no matter how much control was given him, was like going to McDonald's after a night on the town. Tex then went on to make commercials until his death, including the "Frito Bandito" and "Raid" cartoons that were popular in the 60s.

The Rising Cel



by Strom & Perlmutter



STROM HERE AGAIN.
TODAY'S TOPIC IS
"YAMATO."
IT ALL STARTED
IN 1974...

... WHEN OFFICE
ACADEMY FILMS
PUT OUT THE
SUCCESSFUL
ANIMATED 26 PART
TELEVISION SERIES
"SPACE CRUISER
YAMATO." AN EDITED
VERSION OF THE
SERIES WAS
RELEASED THEATRICALY
AND WAS A SMASH
HIT!



THE SEQUEL FILM, CALLED
"ARRIVEDERCI, YAMATO," PITTED
OUR HEROES AGAINST THE
WHITE COMET EMPIRE. THE ENTIRE
CAST WAS KILLED. THE FANS
WERE A BILL UPSET, SO WITH
VEN IA! MIND, PRODUCER YOSHINOBU
NISHIZAKI REDID THE STORY
AS A 26 PART SERIES
WHERE EVERYONE DOESN'T DIE.



FROM THERE, TWO MORE FILMS—
"YAMATO: NEW VOYAGE" AND "BE
FOREVER, YAMATO"—WERE RELEASED
AND DEALT WITH YAMATO'S WAR
WITH THE DARK STAR EMPIRE. IT'S
FAR TOO COMPLICATED TO GET INTO,
BUT SUFFICE IT TO SAY THAT
THEY'RE BOTH GREAT FILMS.
ALSO, THERE WERE EVEN
MORE DEATHS IN THE CAST....



THE THIRD YAMATO TV SEASON IS BEING TRANSLATED FOR

U.S. NOW. WHILE I
WAIT FOR
THAT,
I'LL JUST
SIT BACK
AND LAUGH MY
ASS OFF AT
THE AMERICAN
VERSION OF THE
FIRST TWO
SEASONS!

YEAH.
RIGHT.



STROM AND C. PERLMUTTER '83

WRITTEN AND PENCILLED BY FRANK STROM. INKED BY CATHY PERLMUTTER. LETTERING BY MICHAEL VENTRELLA.



UNRELEASED FILMS

"Rock and Rule" may have opened and closed within a week here in Boston, but at least it was given a chance. There are currently three other animated feature length films in limbo searching for distributors. What is even more surprising is the fact that all three are from names that have had success with previous films.

Fire and Ice is the latest from Ralph Bakshi, a largely rotoscoped fantasy done in collaboration with that king of fantasy illustration, Frank Frazetta. The script was written by Roy Thomas and Gerry Conway. It has yet to grab an American distributor, but is enjoying popularity overseas.

The Plague Dogs was originally to be distributed by Avco-Embassy, but because of management changes, it has been dropped. This film is the latest from Martin Rosen (of Watership Down fame). So far, he has been unable to generate any interest in America.

Twice Upon A Time was originally slated for a Christmas 1982 release. Nobody knows if it ever will see the light of day, despite its being produced by George Lucas.

Rock and Rule, since its disastrous test showing here, has been permanently shelved. It may pop up now and then as a midnight show or at science fiction conventions.

This is a bad sign all around. If these films cannot get distribution, how can we expect any new studios to break into the field? Future projects may never see the light of day.

CABLE CARTOON

HEY, GOOD LOOKIN' & THE MOUSE AND HIS CHILD

by Scott Gillespie

One of the many benefits of cable is being able to view films that were never released or that received poor distribution. Cable also allows the viewing of shorts that would otherwise find no outlet.

Even though these films aren't as widely viewed yet as on commercial TV and cinema, I will be writing an occasional review--or even a regular column if it's well received--on animation seen on cable.

I'll start with Ralph Bakshi's "Hey, Good Lookin'." This film was originally released more than five years ago, but due to sparse distribution, it has been rather rarely viewed. I was pleasantly surprised by the film. It is a definite cut above some of Bakshi's recent farces, such as "Lord of the Rings" and "American Pop." One of the reasons is the much more reserved use of rotoscoping. I have always found rotoscoping a tricky technique. Unless used correctly, it breaks the animator's style continuity.

The film is basically a 50s flashback in which Bakshi attempts to shatter the "Happy Days" illusion of what a teenager's life was like in the 50s. He also cuts down the glamorized view of gangs. (There is a subtle poke at "West Side Story" at the beginning.)

The setting is Brooklyn. Bakshi has good backgrounds and well drawn characters, but as in all of Bakshi's work, the backgrounds are totally alienated from the actions and characters in the foreground. He used some live footage that I thought quite unnecessary.

The main characters are: Vinnie, a likeable punk who is sort of the superficial leader of the Stompers (a street gang) who acts, looks, and talks tough but really isn't; Crazy Shapiro ("Psychotic" Shapiro would be more accurate), Vinnie's

best friend and punk colleague; Rozzie, Vinnie's girl, a status seeking vixen; and Eva, an obese romantic, who sits and makes sandwiches through most of the picture.

The plot is fair. Vinnie, through a chance circumstance, is forced to call a rumble between the Stompers and the Chaplains (a rival black gang). However, Vinnie doesn't want to fight and the Stompers don't really care to do anything but get drunk, have sex, and listen to rock and roll. Fate has other plans. One of the Stompers is nearly killed by a Chaplain, and revenge becomes order of the day. Vinnie is framed for the murder of some Chaplains, and the rumble is on. During all this, a sort of loveless romance grows between Vinnie and Rozzie.

After the rumble, the plot gets fuzzy. There are a few loose ends that the viewers must tie up themselves.

My final criticism is on the sound. The music was fine (though Bakshi should have given it a more 50s sound--I heard synthesizers) but the voices sounded hollow. You could almost picture the actors in the recording studio speaking into the mikes.

All in all, a fair flick. I'd give it a three on a scale of five.

The second film is as far removed in plot and intention from "Hey, Good Lookin'" as Mother Theresa is from Cruella DeVille.

"The Mouse and His Child" (1977) is an excursion into the world by a toy mouse and--you guessed it--his child. Joined at the hands, their one wish is to be independent or "self winding" as they call it. This search, which they were sort of forced on, begins in a toy shop where they accidentally fall off a table trying to escape their own mortality. Yeah, I know it sounds heavy, but that seems to be the basic concept of this whole film. On the surface, it is a good straight fantasy flick, but poke your intellect further between the lines and the actions and it's a whole 'nother story. It's not preachy or so thick with symbols that you worry if you're missing any of the points being presented. (e.g.: "Look! A fallen tree! What can it mean?" "Man's inhumanity to nature? The inevitable ending of life? Heavy birds?")

They end up in the city dump and in the claws of Emmanuel Worthington Rat III, Manny to his friends. (Voice by Peter Ustinov). Manny rules the dump with his sharp teeth and his wind up work force, of which Mouse and his child are press-ganged. The lines that best sum up Manny are when child mouse says, "You're a bad rat!" and Manny gently replies, "You noticed."

Due to Manny's weakness for treacle brittle, and his incompetent follower Ralphie, Mouse and child escape. The plot is a bit complicated and too long. The characters helped to keep it interesting, but the major fault of this film is that it tried to be deep enough to keep adult's attentions but light enough to keep the kids content, but never fully accomplishes either. The film is basically enjoyable (if you have the patience to sit through it). I did, which is why I gave it a 2½.

TOP FILMS

What's your favorite feature length animated film? We haven't exactly had a rush of responses when we asked that question, but we do have enough to give a first list. The list will be constantly updated, so we will constantly accepting lists!

Here's how it works: You send us your top ten list in order. The number one film on your list gets ten points, the number two film gets nine, and so on. We want to stress that this is a list of favorite films, not best films. You may believe that "Fantasia" is the best animated film ever from every technical and critical angle, but you personally would rather watch "Wizards" despite its flaws. See how it works?

"The Secret of NIMH" won out on our first list. It wasn't number one on anyone's list, but taken in total, it scored high enough to beat out the competition.

Be sure to send in your list as soon as possible, and include your name, as we don't want any ballot stuffing! (Be fair, people). You can include your friends lists, too, but please don't ask people to submit lists who have only seen ten animated films in their life. Let's keep our poll accurate and professional.

Enough of that. Here are the results:

1. The Secret of NIMH
2. Yellow Submarine
3. The Jungle Book
4. Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs
5. Watership Down
6. Peter Pan
7. Fantasia
8. Bambi
9. A Boy Named Charlie Brown
Galaxy Express 999
10. Cinderella
The Hobbit
Terra Hei (Towards the Terra)
11. Wizards
12. The Last Unicorn
13. Allegro Non Troppo
Gay Purree
Pinocchio
14. Sleeping Beauty
15. Yamato No Towa (Be Forever, Yamato)
16. Fritz the Cat
17. Lady and the Tramp
18. Rock & Rule
19. Heavy Metal
20. Three Caballeros

Trivia

1. Mark Hamill, of "Star Wars" fame, had a bit speaking part in what 70s animation?
 - a) Fritz the Cat
 - b) Wizards
 - c) The Point
 - d) Jabba the Fudd
2. What was the first Warner Brothers cartoon?
 - a) Sinking in the Bathtub
 - b) Meet Bugs Bunny
 - c) Box Car Blues
 - d) Elmer of Melnibone
3. What was the name of the mouse friend of Dumbo?
 - a) Arthur Dent
 - b) Billy Mouse
 - c) Timothy
 - d) Salacious Crumb
4. What does UPA stand for?
 - a) United Professional Animators
 - b) United Productions of America
 - c) Universal Pictures Associated
 - d) Unbelievably Primitive Animation
5. What film did Dustin Hoffman narrate?
 - a) The Dot and the Line
 - b) It's Tough to be a Bird
 - c) The Point
 - d) Tootsie gets Rolled
6. What director at what studio did "Hockey Homicide"?
 - a) Tex Avery at MGM
 - b) Chuck Jones at Warner Brothers
 - c) Ralph Bakshi at Terrytoones
 - d) Jack Kinney at Disney
7. Who directed the Ziggy Christmas Special?
 - a) Chuck Jones
 - b) Friz Freling
 - c) Richard Williams
 - d) Bill Melendez
8. What was the first animated film to win an Academy award for the newly created category? (Hint: It was also the first color cartoon.)
 - a) The Technicolor Yawn
 - b) Flowers and Trees
 - c) Birds and Bees
 - d) Get Off My Knees
9. Who wrote "Gerald McBoingboing"?
 - a) James Thurber
 - b) Ludwig Bemelman
 - c) Theodore Geisel (a/k/a Dr. Suess)
 - d) Edgar Allen Poe
10. Which of these songs was NOT in "Yellow Submarine"?
 - a) When I'm 64
 - b) Only A Northern Song
 - c) Hey Bulldog
 - d) It's All Too Much

ANSWERS: 1.b; 2.a; 3.c; 4.b; 5.c
6.d; 7.c; 8.b; 9.c; 10.c

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